

**This is an example of a proposal submitted to LIP for funding.**

**LANDOWNER INCENTIVE PROGRAM  
Format for Proposals  
2003-2004**

Project title: **Restoration of Native Grasslands on the Anywhere Farm, Someplace Township,  
New Jersey**

Amount requested: \$66,720.00

Type of Project:       Habitat  
                                  Management

Submitted by / Contact Information:

Name:  
Organization:  
Address: \_  
City, State, Zip: \_  
Phone Number:  
Email:

**Project Summary:**

This project will establish up to 60 acres of contiguous grassland habitat on a 110-acre farm in Someplace Township, Somerset County. The project will retire acreage from cultivation and convert it, along with existing cool season grass pastures and fallow fields, into native warm season grasses. Nine species listed as state threatened or special concern have been recorded on the property, seven of which may directly benefit from this habitat conversion. Because the farm is adjacent to an extensive complex of public land, the direct contribution of this project to the viability of resident populations of rare species as well as the project's contribution as a demonstration for other nearby landowners is expected to be significant.

**Location:** Please describe the location of the project including habitat type or other ecosystem characteristics. **(Map is not included in this example. Please make sure you submit a MAP)** The Anywhere Farm lies within Someplace Township, Somerset County. Someplace Township has been the site of ambitious open space preservation plans in Central New Jersey. Over 30% of the 28,049 acres in the township (8758 acres) have been permanently protected as open space, under mixed ownership including state, county, township, and farmland easements. The majority of this land is unforested open land that includes cropland, pasture, and fallow fields. The Anywhere Farm encompasses 110 acres that are nearly surrounded by state and township owned land. The Anywhere Farm is linked to the larger open space complex and is part of the largest block of preserved land in the township. Habitats on the Anywhere Farm include 18 -20 acres of oak/hickory forest, 8 acres of planted walnut and ash, 12 acres of Christmas trees, and approximately 60 acres of fields. Crops recently planted in the fields include corn, soybean, wheat, alfalfa, clover, and rye in addition to hayfields.

**Need:** Why is the project being undertaken? Please include E/T species that will benefit from this

project.

Grassland and other early successional species dominate the Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern lists in New Jersey, accounting for 28.6% of all avian species on the three lists. Suitable nesting habitat for these species is disappearing rapidly from New Jersey with development, habitat alterations introduced by mechanized farming, and natural habitat succession being the largest contributors of habitat loss. The dwindling populations of these species along with the ephemeral nature of their habitat, makes them one of the most critically endangered habitat guilds in the state of New Jersey. Isolated patches of grassland habitats that support a few individuals of any of these species will not reverse their current endangerment or prevent their eventual extirpation from New Jersey. The best strategy to conserve this suite of species is to identify areas with a large enough land base to support a population then work to stabilize available habitat and create additional habitat in the immediate vicinity. These areas should not be in areas dominated by forest, but more likely will be found in areas with a high percentage of pasture or cropland in the landscape that can be altered to improve habitat for grassland birds.

The Anywhere Farm is already protected through a Farmland Conservation program that recently purchased development rights to the property. Nine species listed on the New Jersey Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern lists have been recorded on the Anywhere Farm including grasshopper sparrow, savannah sparrow, northern harrier, Cooper's hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, American kestrel, horned lark, common nighthawk, and bobolink. Seven of these could be expected to directly benefit from grassland restoration and management on the Anywhere Farm. Grasshopper sparrow and Cooper's hawk have been recorded during the breeding season and likely nest in the area. Savannah sparrow and common nighthawk have been recorded near the beginning of the nesting season and may also nest on the property, while American kestrel is a confirmed annual nester already benefiting from voluntary actions specifically taken by the landowner to provide nest boxes on the property. The landowner has also erected nest boxes on a barn on the property to encourage nesting by the state special concern common barn owl. Other state threatened and endangered early successional species, e.g. yellow-breasted chat and eastern meadowlark, were detected nearby during the New Jersey Breeding Bird Atlas project and might also benefit from this project.

**Objective:** Based on the stated need, what is to be accomplished during the project period?

Habitat for grassland birds will be established in areas currently cropped, maintained for cool season hay, or recently fallowed. These converted acres will provide foraging habitat for 1 - 2 American kestrel pairs and up to 40 pair of grasshopper sparrows. Additionally, benefits are also expected for other grassland and early successional species detected on the property or in nearby areas, but for which nesting has not yet been confirmed. A management plan will be developed to maintain habitat in a suitable condition for the scope of the project contract.

**Approach:** How will the objective(s) be attained? Please include specific procedures, proposed timetable for work, and additional cooperators/partners.

The landowner will enroll in the project for 5 years, with a potential option for a longer extension. Over the initial three years of the project the croplands and pastures will be converted to native grasslands. An herbicide mix will be used in late winter/early spring to kill nonnative cool season grasses. Following herbicide treatment, a warm season grass drill will be used to plant the native grasses on the site. Follow-up herbicide treatments will be used if necessary. Hedgerows separating fields will be removed to increase the overall grassland patch size and improve habitat for grassland birds. Scattered native shrubs may be left to retain perches for American kestrel. Spot treatments of

herbicides will also be used to eradicate multiflora rose and other exotic shrubs from the grassland areas. After establishment, grasslands will be maintained on a 2-3 year mowing/haying cycle if burning is not feasible. No mowing will be done prior to July 15, to provide time for birds to fledge broods.

Total habitat conversion will occur over a 5-year period. The New Jersey Audubon Society will work with the private landowner to develop a management plan and prescription for the property. This plan will also include a large component of grassland restoration as well as outreach and education for the public.

**Expected results or benefits:** How will this project positively impact endangered or threatened species? Try to provide quantifiable or verifiable benefits.

This project will provide a reliable source of suitable habitat for these species in the landscape. Together with the natural area adjacent to the property, it is possible to create a grassland patch of nearly 150 acres. This would be a substantial contribution for nesting grassland birds and also serve as a demonstration to neighboring landowners, both public and private. The project could easily be replicated on adjacent lands. With a protected open space acreage exceeding 8700 acres, there is tremendous potential to create a valuable refuge for grassland birds that combines conservation-friendly farming practices, managed haylands, and natural areas dedicated to wildlife.

**Estimated Cost:** Please provide as much detail as possible. Remember that LIP requires a 25% match from the landowner which can include in-kind contributions. Below is an example of a budget which you may use or attach your own budget.

<b>5-Year Project Budget</b>				
	Amount Requested	Estimated Match or In-kind Contribution	Total Project Cost	
Contracted Services	\$ 3,520.00		\$	3,520.00
Equipment	\$ 500.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$	6,500.00
Supplies & Materials	\$ 25,200.00		\$	25,200.00
Direct Incentive Payment	\$ 37,500.00		\$	37,500.00
In-kind Labor		\$ 20,920.00	\$	20,920.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 66,720.00</b>	<b>\$ 26,920.00</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>93,640.00</b>

\*Using NRCS cost table estimate of \$420/acre

Contracted Services include oversight of survey work, estimated at 10% of overall cost.

Equipment includes rental fees for grass drill.

Supplies and Material include seed and herbicide.

Incentive Payment provides \$125/acre/year for the 60 acres for crops removed from production and for keeping other fallow areas out of production.

In-Kind Labor includes follow-up bird surveys, time and equipment rental to plant and maintain grasslands, etc.